



**TOWN OF FOUNTAIN HILLS
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

May 12, 2008

A public meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was convened and called to order by Chair Naomi Bryant at 5:30 PM, Monday, May 12, 2008 in the Council Chambers at Town Hall, located at 16705 East Avenue of the Fountains, Fountain Hills, Arizona.

Call to Order – Roll Call: Present at roll call were the following members of the Parks and Recreation Commission: Chair Naomi Bryant, Vice Chair Sharon Dennis, Commissioners Fred Bedell, Tom Barberic, and Karyn Brown. Commissioner Ernie Cofrances was absent. Staff members present were Director Mark Mayer, and Susan Gill, Recording Secretary.

AGENDA ITEM #1: CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

No public present.

AGENDA ITEM #2: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 10, 2008 REGULAR MEETING – ACTION ITEM

Chair Bryant asked if there were any additions or corrections to the March 10 meeting minutes. Chair Bryant then called for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 10 meeting. Commissioner Bedell made a motion to approve and Vice Chair Dennis seconded. The motion was made, seconded, and carried 5:0 to approve the minutes as submitted.

AGENDA ITEM #3: 2008 – 09 BUDGET UPDATE – DIRECTOR, MARK MAYER

Director Mayer mentioned that a copy of the proposed Parks and Recreation budget had been e-mailed to the Commissioners to give them an opportunity to review the budget before tonight's meeting. Director Mayer added that the \$715,389 Recreation budget is almost the same as last year. Additional funding for Special Programs including St. Patrick's Day, Movie In the Park, Ballet Under the Stars and Concerts In the Park events have been budgeted under a new line item titled Community Events and Programs. Director Mayer proceeded to give an overview of some of the key Park and Recreation budget items:

- No funding for new positions.
- Traded one of two Park Ranger positions to allow for a Parks Operation Lead position for Desert Vista Neighborhood Park. The salary for this benefited position is prorated for the balance of the year when the park is expected to be fully operational, which should be November/December of this year.
- No funding for the other Park Ranger position.
- Resurfacing of the tennis courts at Golden Eagle Park and Four Peaks Neighborhood Park will be done.
- Demolition of Bus Barn at Four Peaks Neighborhood Park will be done in house in cooperation with the Street Department.
- Painting of the ramadas at Golden Eagle Park will be done.
- VRF (Vehicle Replacement Fund) is a new line item and is a revolving fund where a "rental" cost will be paid into the Town's General Fund that will allow for the purchase of new tractors, trucks, and gators. Each department within the Town that utilizes "rolling stock" contributes to this fund so that when a vehicle reaches ten years of age or a hundred thousand miles it will be traded in and the funds for the transaction should be available.

- Fountain Park Field and Park Maintenance budget went from \$34,500 to a proposed \$62,469. The following amounts are part of the Turf Enhancement Program:
 - \$27,225 for fertilization of new turf
 - \$24,000 for soil preparation, seed, and herbicide.
- Phase II of Desert Vista Neighborhood Park will be completed.
- Fountain Park - finishing the last phase will include the following, but is not scheduled for next year:
 - Monument signage
 - Development of the east parking lot
 - Parking lot will be reconfigured, not enlarged
 - new curbs
 - new lighting
 - landscaping
 - Light bollards around the walking path.

Chair Bryant inquired about the bare patches of turf at Fountain Park. Director Mayer replied that aeration, fertilization, and over seeding of the entire park with Bermuda seed was recently completed. Director Mayer added that last fall staff over seeded with rye grass, and that all the places where there are bare spots is where the rye grass is dying off. Director Mayer reiterated that the turf at Fountain Park is in a transitional phase now as the rye grass dies off and the Bermuda grass takes over. The reseeded Bermuda grass should start to germinate within the next couple of weeks and the bare spots should fill in. Director Mayer explained that this fall park staff will again over seed with rye grass and that because Rye grass is seasonal, as it goes dormant staff will over seed again with Bermuda grass.

Director Mayer mentioned that during the budget meetings he was asked to cut back on the costs associated with the turf maintenance and enhancement program for Fountain Park; fertilizing, over seeding, and aeration. Director Mayer explained that he was unwilling to accept any budget cuts in this area after spending one half to three quarter million dollars on the new irrigation system. After some discussion it was decided to fund this expenditure with budget cuts from other items. Director Mayer added that the exception to this was the planned sodding of the area by the playground. It was decided to over seed this area, with the understanding if over seeding doesn't work a budget request for sod will be requested for fiscal year 09/10.

Chair Bryant asked if any amenities would be added to Four Peaks Neighborhood Park. Director Mayer said that there is a restroom facility on the north side by the soccer field. Director Mayer added that the \$45,000 under Contract Services in the last budget was designated to update the Master Plan but since everything has been pushed back due to budget constraints it was decided to update the Master Plan at a later date when there is funding available and then be able to begin upgrades to the park.

Director Mayer mentioned that at Golden Eagle Park the \$300, 000 for Contractual Services for the design of the two joint Town/School park sites has been deferred and moved back several years. The School District has been notified of the delay.

Chair Bryant inquired about the Dog Park and Skate Park not being accessible. Director Mayer said that for safety reasons during this phase of construction while they are trenching at the south entrance and the sidewalk is being put in, both areas have been shut down. Director Mayer added that the dog park should reopen next week and the Skate Park is scheduled to reopen a few weeks later (*June 9*). Vice Chair Dennis asked if the newspaper could be notified. Director Mayer replied that the media had already been notified of the closures and would be notified again for the reopening.

Director Mayer informed the Commissioner's that Council would be setting the maximum levy for the budget at their Thursday, May 15th meeting. The maximum levy insures that expenditures on behalf of the Town cannot exceed a particular amount; we can spend less but not more. The actual budget review and approval is scheduled

for June 5th, where the Council will set the budgets for each individual department. Director Mayer and staff will be present to answer any questions Council may have.

Vice Chair Dennis inquired if there was any way to get information out to the anti-tax people that (*Recreation and Park*) items will be cut if the tax is not approved. Director Mayer replied that it is an ongoing effort to inform and educate the public. Director Mayer added that the Town is in an awkward position because it cannot push for a tax increase it can only provide information. Director Mayer mentioned that there is an organized group that advocates the tax increase and is providing information on what could happen if a tax is not approved, such as the skate park, and the splash park that could be in jeopardy or have diminished hours of operation such as the City of Mesa has experienced. Director Mayer added that it all depends on the revenue situation. Director Mayer mentioned that Vice Chair Dennis asked if there would be money generated from new building. Director Mayer replied that there would be some construction revenue received from MCO for Eagles Nest, and some from small lots within Town.

Commissioner Barberic inquired if it was really an uphill battle to grow grass (*at Fountain Park*). Director Mayer replied that yes, it was. Soil compaction and poor soil conditions are ongoing problems, but Director Mayer was optimistic that within a year everyone would see a dramatic difference in the way the park looks.

AGENDA ITEM #4: 2008-2009 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT UPDATE – DIRECTOR, MARK MAYER

Director Mayer began with information on Open Space Projects and mentioned the Adero Canyon Trailhead for a total of almost \$2.6 million, there is approximately \$1.4 million in the budget now. Director Mayer said that Capital Projects is an estimate of what we are told a project will cost but does not represent funding and does not guarantee that the funding will be there to support the project. Director Mayer added that construction revenues are down from \$450,000 a year to \$60,000 to \$70,000 and said the construction revenues and development fees affect our budget. The Trail Connectivity Plan is being administered through the Engineering Department and is a plan to address where we have some crossings from Fountain Park to the trails up over the lake and also designed to create some connections between parks such as from Fountain Park coming in the back way to Desert Vista Neighborhood Park.

Commissioner Barberic asked if the Overlook Trail section at La Montana had always been there. Director Mayer replied yes.

Director Mayer mentioned that Preserve access continues to be discussed with MCO and added that there is \$170,000 in the budget should we eventually be able to develop a trailhead, and if not the money would revert back to help fund the Adero Canyon Trailhead. Director Mayer updated the Commissioners on the Desert Botanical Garden improvements and mentioned that there was a neighborhood meeting held last week to answer questions on the improvements being planned at the site which is located at Kingstree and Fountain Hills Boulevard.

Director Mayer discussed the Parks and Recreation projects which are funded from development fees. Desert Vista Neighborhood Park improvements are funded at almost \$1.7 million, and Four Peaks Neighborhood Park improvements have been pushed back until 2011/2012. The grants received for Desert Vista Park was instrumental in being able to finish the project this year.

Director Mayer mentioned that improvements for Fountain Park are funded for \$1.3 million to finish off the parking lot, monument signage, and other small items that need to be completed.

Director Mayer concluded that the development of the two joint Town/School sites has been pushed back and that at the request of the School District, McDowell Mountain Elementary School will be developed first in fiscal year 2010/2011 and Fountain Hills High School is scheduled for fiscal year 2011/2012.

Vice Chair Dennis inquired what the revenue projections were for rentals such as ramadas. Director Mayer mentioned that the ramadas are experiencing more use, but because more shelters have been built the people utilizing them are not booking them in advance, deciding instead to just show up and take their chances that a ramada will be available and thereby avoid paying a rental fee. Director Mayer mentioned that the Kiwanis ramada located by the Splash Park is extremely popular with two or three bookings a day for children's parties. Director Mayer mentioned that the way the fee schedule is structured residents pay half price for rental fees.

AGENDA ITEM #5: DISCUSSION OF ELLMAN PROPERTY/RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL – DIRECTOR, MARK MAYER – ACTION ITEM

Utilizing a site map, Director Mayer gave an overview of the Ellman Company's plans for development of their property. Director Mayer advised the Commissioners that last week public meetings were held with Planning and Zoning to discuss bringing a proposal to Council at their May 15th meeting. Director Mayer said this is by far the biggest project he has been involved with since he has been with the Town. Director Mayer mentioned that the initial proposal was for forty-two acres and it is now at forty-six acres. Potentially a community park with athletic fields and a neighborhood park. In addition to providing the land and ultimately deeding it to the Town Ellman is committed to development of the two sites which include construction of athletic fields, lighted tennis courts, a basketball court, parking, two playground areas, a larger open area for practices, and two picnic ramadas. If the Town had taken a cash dedication that they are allowed on property, would have brought in about two million dollars, if we had purchased land with the 2 million dollars at Ellman's cost of about \$100,000 per acre we would have picked up about twenty acres. But with this plan we are receiving 46 acres of land and improvements of the land.

Commissioner Bedell inquired if a joint School/Town public aquatic center is being discussed. Director Mayer said that there has been some discussion but the problem is how to fund it. The Ellman Company was approached with the idea but has not made a commitment one way or the other at this point. Director Mayer mentioned that in his opinion it would require a partnership from several different organizations and that other fitness amenities would need to be added to make it a viable option for them.

Some discussion followed amongst the Commissioners regarding Peaks Fitness swimming pool.

Chair Bryant asked who decided which amenities would be needed. Director Mayer replied that the Ellman Company had approached the department and asked what type of amenities we would include if we were building a community park and neighborhood park. Chair Bryant asked if an aquatic center had been part of our request. Director Mayer mentioned that an aquatic center was not discussed initially, but was subsequently discussed and further discussions will be ongoing. Director Mayer added that one issue that needs to be resolved is that they (*Ellman Company*) have to use all the effluent water that they generate and keep it on site.

Director Mayer utilized a *Neighborhood Park Needs/Community Park Needs Analysis* chart to explain to the Commissioners the minimal number of park acres recommended by the NRPA (*National Recreation and Park Association*) of 2.5 acres per 2,500 hundred people. Director Mayer added that with regard to the Parks and Recreation General Plan we have a deficit of acreage of park land south of Shea but that we have acquired acreage on the western side of Town, which remains undeveloped. Director Mayer mentioned that the Fire Department site, South of Shea on Saguaro is being closed and suggested that if the Town does not sell the site it could potentially be acquired as park property which could be minimally developed with perhaps a basketball court or other amenity that would serve the neighborhood.

Commissioner Bedell made a motion to support a recommendation to Council in support of the Ellman development park acreage and amenities. Commissioner Barberic seconded, it was moved and carried 5:0 to recommend to Council their support of the Ellman Company's plan for development of their property.

AGENDA ITEM #6: CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE – DIRECTOR MARK MAYER

Director Mayer gave a brief update on the following:

- Desert Vista Neighborhood Park Improvements –
 - Weekly meetings with the contractor Valley Rain.
 - Project on schedule
 - Skate Park will reopen within two weeks when the alley improvements are finished.
 - Dog Park will reopen sooner.
 - Approval of Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) - Presented at Town Council's June 5 meeting.

AGENDA ITEM #7: 3RD QUARTER VANDALISM UPDATE – DIRECTOR, MARK MAYER

The Commissioners were provided a copy of the 3rd Quarter Park Vandalism Report and Director Mayer gave a brief update on each of the parks. Brief discussions followed regarding the theft of the security cameras at Desert Vista Neighborhood Park and the accumulative damage done by pegs on the bikes at Golden Eagle Park over previous years prior to the opening of the Skate Park.

AGENDA ITEM #8: UPDATE ON FOUNTAIN HILLS CULTURAL AND CIVIC ASSOCIATION – CHAIR BRYANT

Chair Bryant gave a brief update on the FHCCA:

- Annual meeting is May 13 at Appian Way restaurant.
- Chair Bryant participated at the Thunderbird Wine & Art Fair.
- Piano Competition finalists were Anna Hahn and David Chu.
- Strings and Chorals summer school will be held at Four Peaks School.
- The theatrical play *Miss Saigon* will be performed at the Fountain Hills Community Theatre.

AGENDA ITEM #9: TOWN COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE – DIRECTOR, MARK MAYER

Director Mayer provided an update on the following:

- MMPC Commissioner Peg Tibbetts was made an Ex-Officio member of the MMPC and an appreciation plaque was presented to her son at the May 15 Council meeting. Currently advertising for her opening on the Commission.
- The *Potato Man* sculpture has been placed at the Community Center and another sculpture titled *Freedom* is scheduled to go to Council for approval.
- New Town Manager takes office on July 7, 2008.

AGENDA ITEM #10: ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING.

Chair Bryant called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Barberic moved to adjourn; Commissioner Bedell seconded, and the motion carried 5:0 to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 PM

Next meeting is scheduled for September 8, 2008.

Fountain Hills Parks and Recreation Commission

By: _____
Naomi Bryant, Chair

Reviewed by:

Mark C. Mayer, Director of Parks and Recreation

Prepared by:

Susan Gill, Executive Assistant

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Fountain Hills Parks and Recreation Regular Meeting held on March 10, 2008. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and that a quorum was present.

By:

Naomi Bryant, Chair